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INVESTIGATE THE COMPARATIVE EFFECT OF THE EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION OF SUMMARIZING STRATEGY AND INFERENCING STRATEGY ON EFL LEARNERS' READING ANXIETY

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: *This study aims to systematically investigate the impact of teaching summarizing and inferencing strategies on the reading anxiety of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in an EFL context.*
Design/methodology/approach: *Ninety intermediate female EFL learners, aged 19 to 27, attending English classes at Tehran University Language Center, participated in this study. They took a piloted sample of the Priliminary English Test (PET) as a proficiency test. The classes were instructed by the same teacher, with the only difference being the treatment: the summarizing strategy group followed Zafarani and Kabgani's model (2014), while the inferencing strategy group followed Hall and Barnes's Model (2017). The Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale was administered to both experimental groups as a posttest after the treatment period.*
Findings: *Analysis using the Mann-Whitney U test revealed that the administration of a summarizing strategy led to a greater reduction in reading anxiety among EFL learners compared to the inferencing group. These findings suggest that EFL teachers may benefit from incorporating summarizing strategies to alleviate reading anxiety among learners.*
Originality: *This study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence of the effectiveness of summarizing strategies in reducing reading anxiety in the EFL context. It offers insights for EFL teachers to consider a broader range of strategies to address learners' anxiety issues, thereby enhancing the overall reading comprehension experience.*

Keywords: *Summarizing Strategy, Inferencing Strategy, EFL Learners, Reading Anxiety.*

INTRODUCTION

Reading in a foreign language is anxiety-provoking to some students (Horwitz *et al.*, 1986). This means that increasing students' reading anxiety levels leads to a decrease in students' final grades. Saito *et al.* (1999, p. 216) suggested that to reduce anxiety, teachers should develop reading practices, such as using different types of reading strategies, that are more effective than word-for-word translation.

The importance of reading strategies was emphasized by many scholars (Costa and Bena, 2008). In this regard Grabe (2009, cited in Fatemipour and Hashemi, 2016) stated that "Acquisition of better reading strategies is needed to crack the illusion of comprehension in readers who are settling for low standards of comprehension." (p. 449) and consequently leads to having lower levels of anxiety.

It seems that inadequate localized attention to a set of effective strategies in reading is among the reasons that contribute to the learners' difficulties in reading comprehension which leads to anxiety (Lehr *et al.*, 2005). However, even though such need has been felt and recognized, equipping the learners with satisfactory strategies has not been fulfilled, because most of the language teachers neglect them in their teaching process. Therefore, it is necessary to search for useful strategies to increase the level of reading comprehension and lower the level of anxiety in the EFL context. Among the numerous available strategies applicable to reading, the researcher's main focus was on summarizing strategy and inferencing strategy. Being familiar with these strategies and applying them may help students to become more strategic in the reading process, promote their reading performance, and lower their reading anxiety.

According to Jalongo and Hirsh (2010) reading anxiety is defined as "A specific, situational phobia toward the act of reading that has physical and cognitive reactions" (p. 434). In this study reading anxiety was operationally defined as the scores participants obtained on the English version of the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) developed by Saito, Horwitz, and Garza (1999).

Considering that there are few studies on foreign language reading anxiety (Abdelhalim, 2017) and the paucity of research, specifically in the EFL contexts, on the relationships between reading anxiety, and the choice of reading strategies (Zarei, 2014), the principal aim of this study was to investigate the comparative effect of the explicit instruction of summarizing strategy and inferencing strategy on EFL learners' reading anxiety in an attempt to fill part of the existing gap.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

The participants of this study were 60 female EFL learners within the age range of 19-27 who study English as a foreign language at an intermediate level in Tehran University Language Center which is located in Tehran, Iran. These participants were non-randomly selected and homogenized among 90 learners through employing the Preliminary English Test (PET). The participants whose scores fell within one standard deviation below and above the mean were selected. They were randomly assigned into two experimental groups of 30 named "Experimental Group I: Summarizing Strategy" and " Experimental Group II: Inferencing Strategy".

Before administrating the PET test, a group of 30 students with almost similar characteristics to the target sample were used for the piloting of the PET test.

Besides the researcher herself as a teacher and rater, another trained rater who was an MA holder in TEFL with seven years of teaching experience attended the scoring of the writing section of PET based on the General Mark Schemes for Writing.

Instrumentation

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the following instruments were utilized to collect the relevant data.

Preliminary English Test

To check the homogeneity of the participants in terms of general language proficiency the researcher applied a piloted version of PET adapted from the book PET Practice Test. The PET is considered an intermediate-level Cambridge ESOL exam that measures the four language skills reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Reading and Writing

PET consisted of two papers: paper 1 was allocated to reading and writing. The reading section consisted of five parts with 35 reading comprehension questions. It included 10 multiple-choice, 5 matching, 10 true/false, and 10 four-option multiple-choice cloze test. The total score for this part is 35. The writing section consisted of three parts with 8 questions including, sentence transformation, writing a short message, and writing a letter or a short story. The total score for this part is 15. The examinees needed to complete this paper in 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Listening

Paper two had been allocated to listening. It had 25 questions including multiple-choice, fill-in-the-gap, and true/false. The examinees had been required to be able to follow and understand a range of spoken materials including announcements and discussions about everyday life. Thirty-five minutes were allotted for this section.

Speaking

An interviewer wanted to take the speaking test. The candidates had to show their spoken English ability by taking part in the conversation, asking and answering questions, and talking freely about their likes and dislikes. 10 to 15 minutes used to be allotted for this section.

It should be noted that only the reading and writing sections of the PET test were administered but the listening and speaking sections of the test were not administered because of the practical issues and not having permission from Tehran University Language Center's officials to perform this part. Before the main administration, to determine the reliability of the PET, a pilot study was run with 30 subjects whose characteristics were almost similar to those of the target participants, and its reliability was calculated.

General Mark Schemes for Writing

An analytic writing scale developed by Cambridge under the name of General Mark Schemes for Writing was adapted to rate the writing section of the PET test in this study. It included a scale of 0-5 based on content, organization, cohesion, coherence, format, range, mechanical accuracy, word choice, dictation, and sentence structure.

Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale

To measure the degree of reading anxiety of the participants, the English version of the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) designed by Saito *et al.* (1999) was used. The questionnaire was used to measure the participants' reading anxiety degree at the both beginning and end of the treatments. It is a self-reported measure eliciting EFL learners' anxiety over reading difficulties in the target language, relative difficulty of reading skills, and EFL learners' perception of various aspects of reading.

It contained 20 Likert-scale items. The response continuum was 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. Therefore, the ultimate score was estimated in the possible range of 20 to 100. The higher score indicated the more anxiety, students had while reading. The participants were supposed to answer the items in 10 minutes.

Saito *et al.* (1999) reported that the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale had shown an acceptable level of reliability with an internal consistency coefficient of 0.86. For face and content validity, two experts in TEFL and psychology checked the items for verification. Saito *et al.* tested the construct validity of the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale by calculating the correlation between the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale and the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). A correlation coefficient of 0.64 ($n = 383$, $p < 0.01$) was found, which means that although there was a significant overlap between the two constructs, 59% of the variance was not shared by the two constructs. The FLRAS represented a construct that was related to but distinct from the construct represented by the FLCAS. Hsiao *et al.* (2002) also used confirmatory factor analysis to analyze the construct validity of the Chinese version of the FLRAS and the result supported the unidimensionality of the scale and claimed that the scale was reliable and valid for eliciting foreign language reading anxiety of Chinese college foreign language learners (Marashi and Rahmati, 2017). The FLRAS had also been reported to have a good internal consistency of 0.86 (Cronbach's alpha, $n = 383$) among learners of French, Russian, and Japanese in American Universities (Saito *et al.*, 1999). Moreover, Zhao *et al.* (2013) examined and reported the internal consistency of the FLRAS with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.834. The reliability of the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale in this study was estimated to be 0. 91 in the pretest and 0.88 in posttest using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Material

The main course book applied to both experimental groups during the treatment was "Select Readings (Intermediate Level)" by Lee and Gundersen (2001), published by Oxford University Press. The book included a student book with a self-study audio CD, a workbook, a teacher's edition, and class audio CD, and an MP3 CD, which included all the audio tracks needed to complete the listening activities in the book. The student book contained 14 chapters. Each chapter covered all language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing with a focus on pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. In this study, the participants during a four-week term dealt with chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7 which were about "A Long Walk Home", "Student Learning Teams", "Culture Shock", "How to Make a Speech", and "Private Lives" respectively. It should be mentioned that units 4 and 5 were not included in the syllabus of Tehran University Language Center.

Reading Anxiety Pre/Posttests

There was one dependent variable in this study, reading anxiety, whose pre-treatment state needed to be checked before starting the two treatments. The scores of the pre-treatment administration of the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale were considered the pretest scores of this variable.

Besides, the scores of the post-treatment administration of the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale were considered as the posttest scores of this variable.

Procedure

Pre-Treatment Stage

Before the treatment, piloting the PET test was the very first step in implementing this study. A version of PET adapted from the book PET Practice Test (Quintana, 2010) was administered to 30 non-participating candidates who had almost the same characteristics as the sample. Then, the three characteristics of individual items (Item Facility, Item Discrimination, and Choice Distribution) were calculated. Three malfunctioning items were found upon item analysis. The Cronbach's alpha formula was employed for calculating the reliability of the test scores gained by the participants.

The writing part of PET was rated according to General Mark Schemes for Writing developed by Cambridge ESOL for PET by the two raters, the researcher herself, and another qualified rater. First, the rating scale was shared between the two raters and then to make sure that both had the same understanding of it, a few papers were rated by both. Since it was shown that there was a consistency between the papers they rated, the researcher moved to the actual practice. Later on, the inter-rater reliability was calculated based on the ratings done by both raters for the piloting of PET. Since there was an acceptable consistency between the two raters, the researcher went through the same procedure for the main participants. So, the final score of each student was calculated by the average score of the two raters.

It should be mentioned that the listening and speaking parts of PET were not administered due to practical issues and not having permission from the Tehran University Language Center's officials to perform this part.

The already piloted PET was administered to 90 female EFL learners within the age range of 19-27, who were selected non-randomly. They were studying English as a foreign language at an intermediate level in Tehran University Language Center which is located in Tehran, Iran. Among them 60 students were chosen whose scores fell between one standard deviation above and below the mean. Then, they were randomly divided into two experimental groups, each including 30 participants, namely "Group I: Summarizing Strategy" and "Group II: Inferencing Strategy".

Before the treatment, the scores of the pre-treatment administration of the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) were considered as the pretest scores of this variable.

The two groups were instructed by the same teacher (the researcher), using the same material, chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7 of "Select Readings (Intermediate Level)". The chapters of Select Readings (Intermediate Level) included all language skills and sub-skills. The main purpose of this book is to help students develop the critical reading skills they would need for academic, personal, and career purposes along with listening, speaking, and writing and sub-skills of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. The teacher/researcher tried to teach the relevant grammatical points as well as the essential vocabulary with a special focus on the reading skill.

The only difference lay in teaching of summarizing strategy to one group and the inferencing strategy to another group.

Both experimental groups attended their classes three times a week for 12 sessions during 4 weeks. Each session took about 90 minutes. The teacher/ researcher divided the time of the class into two parts. The first part lasted 55 minutes. During this part, the researcher taught the course book to both of the two experimental groups in the same way. After a five-minute break, the second part, which lasted for 30 minutes, was devoted to the treatment of reading sections which was different in the two experimental groups. The following section clarifies the step-by-step procedure being performed in each group.

Treatment Stage

Experimental Group I: Summarizing Strategy Group. In this experimental group, reading passages were taught through using summarizing strategy instruction. The summarizing group was first explained and discussed the purpose of summarizing the text. It was explained that a summary is a shortened version of the original text, and it contained only the most important points, the main ideas, and removing redundancies. So, a summary is structurally similar to the original text (Zafarani and Kabgani, 2014).

Summarizing strategy instruction in this study was based on Zafarani and Kabgani's Model (2014) which contains four stages: "Reviewing the text, evaluating the paragraph, paraphrasing each paragraph, and Writing the text summary" (p. 960).

Experimental Group II: Inferencing Strategy Group. In this experimental group, reading texts were taught through an inferencing strategy using Hall and Barnes's Model (2017). It contained four steps: Step 1: Preparation, Step 2: Define the Concept of Inference and How to generate it, Step 3: Activating Students' Background Knowledge, Step 4: Giving Feedback to Students.

Post Treatment Stage

At the end of the treatment period, the two experimental groups received the English version of the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (Saito *et al.*, 1999) as a posttest. Then, the statistical procedures were conducted to see whether the difference between the two groups was statistically significant or not.

Design

The design of this study is quasi-experimental because the researcher selected the participants based on a convenient, non-random sampling but randomly divided them into two experimental groups with two different treatments.

There was one independent variable with two modalities, summarizing strategy and inferencing strategy. Reading anxiety was regarded as the dependent variable. The age of the participants (19-27), their gender (female), and their language proficiency (intermediate) were considered as control variables.

Statistical Analyses

Based on the aforementioned research question, the null hypothesis, and the design of the study, different descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data obtained. The Cronbach's Alpha formula was employed to calculate the reliability of the test scores obtained by the participants on PET. Inter-rater reliability of the two raters, through Spearman rank order coefficient of correlation, was calculated. Since the assumption of normality was not retained on the posttest of reading anxiety, the two groups' performance on the posttest was compared using a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test.

RESULTS

Selecting the Participants

To select the participants of the study, the researcher used a PET test. However, before the selection phase, the PET test was piloted to make sure that it could be used confidently for this screening. The sections below describe the details of consecutive processes of piloting and administration plus the further measures the researcher took to ensure as much homogeneity as possible.

Descriptive Statistics of the PET Test Piloting

The PET test was administered to a group of 30 EFL learners, bearing almost the same characteristics as the target sample. All items went through the NRT item analysis procedure, including item discrimination, item facility, and choice distribution. The results showed that three reading items did not exhibit acceptable ID indices. Accordingly, these three items were discarded from the test. Table I reports the descriptive statistics of the PET test in the piloting phase.

Table I. Descriptive Statistics for Piloting the PET Test.

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	Skewness		Kurtosis	
						Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
PET Reading Pilot	30	8	31	19.33	6.364	-.217	.427	-.831	.833
PET Writing Pilot Rater 1	30	8	25	18.70	4.070	-1.126	.427	.913	.833
PET Writing Pilot Rater 2	30	10	25	20.97	3.855	-1.327	.427	1.533	.833
PET Writing Pilot Mean	30	9	25	19.83	3.905	-1.214	.427	1.191	.833
PET Pilot Total	30	22	54	39.17	8.404	-.202	.427	-.714	.833
Valid N (listwise)	30								

Estimating the Internal Consistency of the PET Test

The internal consistency of the PET reading scores gained from the participants in the piloting phase was estimated by using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Table II reports the internal consistency of the piloted test.

Table II. The Internal Consistency of the PET Reading Test.

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.821	.824	32

The Inter-Rater Reliability between the Raters

The piloted PET test was employed as the tool for selecting the participants of the study. As the writing section of the test was scored by the two raters (see the Participants section in chapter three), it was needed to make sure that the inter-rater reliability index for these raters was acceptable. Before inspecting the inter-rater reliability, it was needed to examine the normality of the distributions of the writing scores.

Based on the results, the Sig. values for the scores (.041 and .027) are lower than the critical value (.05). Therefore, the normality of distribution for the writing scores is not supported (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013). Consequently, the inter-rater consistency (reliability) was calculated using the Spearman rank order coefficient of correlation, a non-parametric formula. According to the results of the analysis reported, it was concluded that there was a significant and positive correlation between the two sets of writing scores, $\rho = .955$, $n = 30$, $p < .01$, indicating a high level of inter-rater reliability between the two raters.

Using the Piloted PET Test for Selecting the Participants

Initially, the piloted PET test was administered among 90 individuals to enable the researcher to choose the homogenous participants of the study. Figure 1 presents the actual shape of the distribution of the scores.

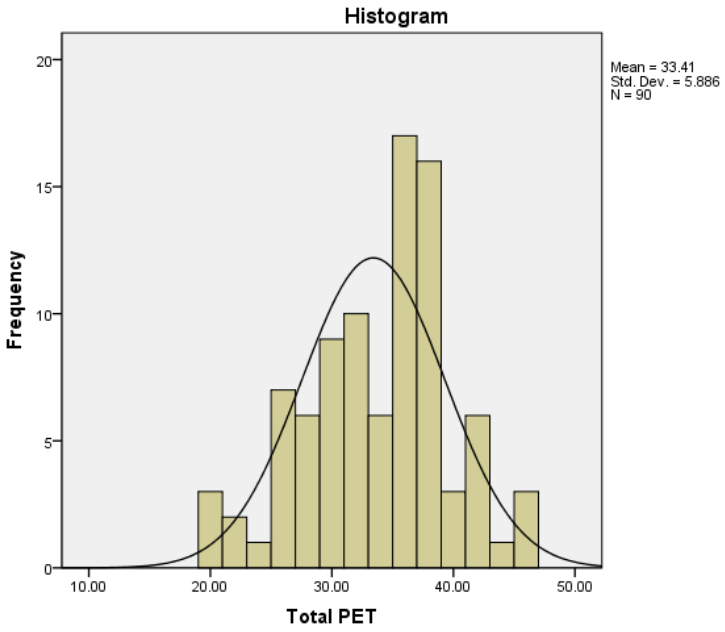

Figure 1. Histogram of the distribution for the initial group.

Based on the values reported, the skewness ratio value (-0.82) fell within the range of -1.96 and +1.96. This point provided support for the normality of the distribution of the scores (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013). Moreover, the minimum score is 22 ($M = 39.36$, $SD = 8.36$). Afterward, to select the participants of the study, the researcher selected those individuals whose

PET scores fell within the range of +1 SD and -1 SD above and below the mean score (31 to 47.72). Following this procedure resulted in keeping 60 individuals as the homogenous participants of the study.

The 60 participants who were selected as the homogeneous participants of the study regarding their language proficiency, were randomly assigned to two experimental groups.

Checking the Pre-Treatment Homogeneity of the Participants

The scores of the first administration of the reading anxiety were considered the pretest scores of the study. The obtained scores of the participants in the experimental groups were to be analyzed/compared by running an independent samples *t*-test. Before discussing the results, the reliability indices for the pretest and posttest of reading anxiety should be reported. The reliability indices as computed by Cronbach's alpha coefficient were .911 and .883 respectively.

After discussing the reliability of the pretest and posttest of reading anxiety, the next section investigates if the two groups were homogenous in terms of their reading anxiety as measured through the pretest. Table III reports the descriptive statistics on the pretest.

Table III. The Descriptive Statistics on Pretest of Reading Anxiety by Groups.

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-Anxiety	Summarizing	30	54.40	6.750	1.232
	Inferencing	30	50.20	10.162	1.855

As observed in Table III, the summarizing group had a higher mean than the inferencing group on the pretest of reading anxiety. Thus, an independent samples *t*-test should be run to check the significance of the difference between the mean scores.

Preliminary Analyses Before Answering the Research Question

Considering the nature of the data and research question in the present study, a parametric statistical test was to be employed, i.e. independent-samples *t*-test to compare the groups on the pretest of reading anxiety, while its non-parametric equivalent, i.e. Mann-Whitney U test should be run to compare the groups on the posttest because as will be discussed below, the assumption of normality was met on pretest only. Several assumptions apply to all parametric tests. The status of these general assumptions was checked in this section; however, the test-specific assumptions were dealt with before answering the research question in the following sections.

Checking the Assumption of Normality

According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), when the sample size is larger than 30, the violation of the assumption of normality would not cause any major problems. Nevertheless, to check the normality of the distributions, Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests were administered; these were followed by inspecting the distribution histograms and Normal Q-Q Plots.

Table IV displays the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests for pretest and posttest of reading anxiety. The probabilities associated with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the pretest of reading anxiety were higher than .05. Thus, it can be concluded that the assumption of normality was retained. That is why, the two groups' scores on the pretest were compared using parametric independent-samples *t*-test. However, the distribution of scores on the posttest did not meet the

normality assumption ($p < .05$). So, the two groups' performance on the posttest was compared using the Mann-Whitney U test. The Q-Q plots were also produced and reported.

Table IV. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of Normality; Pretest and Posttest of Reading Anxiety by

	Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-Anxiety	Summarizing	.128	30	.200	.932	30	.055
	Inferencing	.157	30	.057	.943	30	.112
Post-Anxiety	Summarizing	.250	30	.000	.894	30	.006
	Inferencing	.155	30	.064	.973	30	.617

Normal Q-Q Plot (Figures 2, 3) displays the distribution of observed scores for summarizing and inferencing groups. Since the majority of the dots fell near the diagonals, the normality of the data can be inferred.

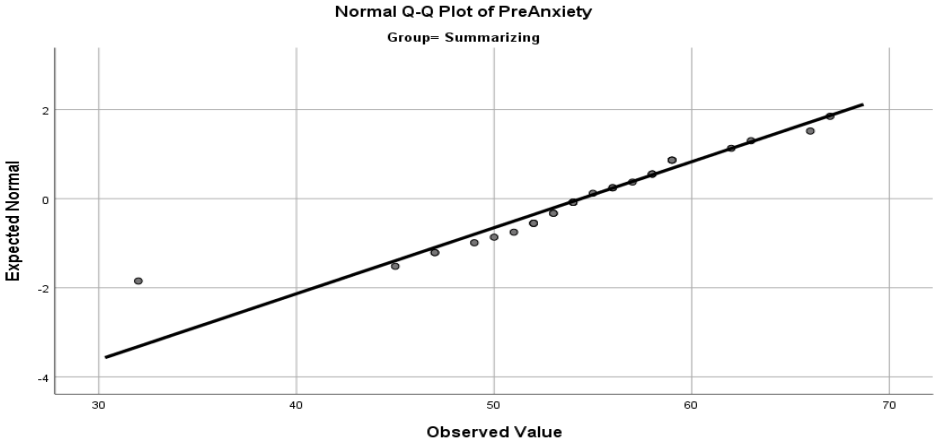

Figure 2. Normal Q-Q plot of pretest for summarizing group.

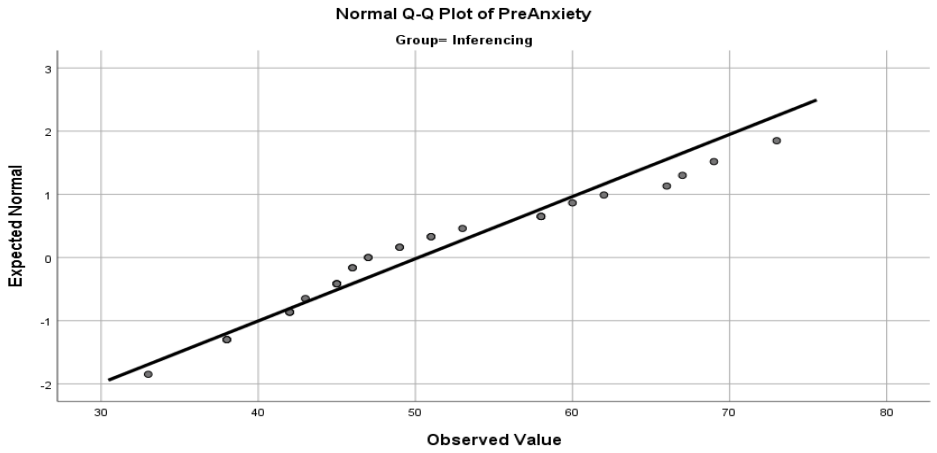

Figure 3. Normal Q-Q plot of pretest for inferencing group.

Before discussing the results, it should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not met (Levene's F = 6.58, p = .013). Since the probability associated with Levene's statistic was lower than .05, it could be concluded that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not met.

The results of the independent-samples *t*-test (t (50) = 1.88, p = .065, 95 % CI [-.258, 8.65]) indicated that the difference between the summarizing (M = 54.40) and inferencing (M = 50.20) was not a significant one. Thus, it could be concluded that the two groups were homogenous in terms of their reading anxiety before the administration of the treatments.

Is there a significant difference between the impact of summarizing and inferencing strategies on EFL learners' reading anxiety?

Since the assumption of normality was not retained on the posttest of reading anxiety, the two groups' performance on the posttest was compared using a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test.

The results indicated that the summarizing group (Mean Ranks = 25.82) had a lower mean rank than the inferencing group (Mean Ranks = 35.18) on the post-test of reading anxiety. That is to say, the application of the summarizing strategy has enabled EFL learners to reduce their reading anxiety more than the inferencing group.

Table V displays the results of the Mann-Whitney U test. The results (U = 309.50, Z = -2.084, p = .037, r = .269 representing a weak effect size) indicated that there was a significant but weak difference between the two groups' mean ranks. Thus the null hypothesis as "there was not any significant difference between the impact of summarizing strategy and inferencing strategy on EFL learners' reading anxiety" was rejected although the results should be interpreted cautiously due to the weak effect size value of .269.

Table V. Mann-Whitney U Test of Posttest of Reading Anxiety by Group.

Test Statistics	
	Posttest of Reading Anxiety
Mann-Whitney U	309.500
Wilcoxon W	774.500
Z	-2.084
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.037

Figure 4 displays the summarizing and inferencing groups' mean ranks on the posttest of reading anxiety. Unlike situations when a higher mean indicates better performance, the lower mean rank of the summarizing group indicates that the type of strategy they had received had helped them to decrease their reading anxiety more than the inferencing group.

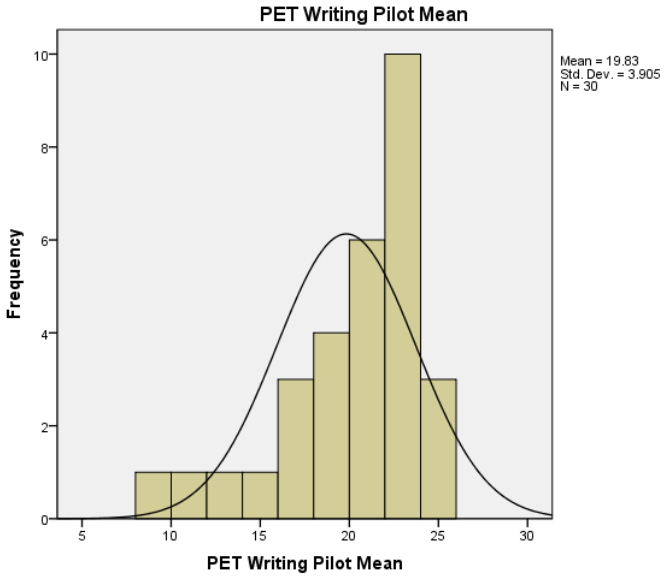

Figure 4. Mean ranks on posttest of reading anxiety by groups.

DISCUSSION

The analyses of the scores using the Mann-Whitney U test revealed that the summarizing strategy group had lower levels of reading anxiety in comparison to the inferencing group. This means that the type of strategy that the summarizing group had received helped them to decrease their reading anxiety more than the inferencing group. Accordingly, based on this result several findings were obtained which are discussed in this section.

This finding is in line with the findings of Marashi and Rahmati (2017) who explored the effect of teaching the Super Six Reading Comprehension Strategies, making connections, predicting, questioning, monitoring, visualizing, and summarizing, on EFL learners' reading anxiety. The obtained results showed that the instruction of reading strategies, including summarizing strategy, significantly lowered EFL learners' reading anxiety.

This result is supported by the findings of Khoshsima and Rezaeian Tiyar (2014), who investigated the effect of summarizing strategy on the reading comprehension of Iranian intermediate EFL learners. The findings of the study indicated that summarizing strategy has a significant effect on EFL learners' reading comprehension.

The finding of this study is also in line with the results of Nosratinia and Shakeri's study (2012) which showed a statistically significant relationship between EFL learners' reading strategies and their reading comprehension scores of the participants. This result is also supported by the findings of Al-Nujaidi (2003) who found that more skillful EFL readers used more reading strategies. They also revealed the important role of reading strategies in helping readers deal with a variety of problems that arise while reading in a foreign language.

The justification of the obtained finding of this study can be that the process of creating summaries assists readers in building relations among notions contained in a reading text as well

as links these notions to their prior knowledge (Doctorow *et al.*, 1978). Summarizing can also assist readers to concentrate on the gist of information and develop comprehension (Anderson and Armbruster, 1984). Summarizing enhances comprehension by developing self-testing during reading to modify comprehension breakdowns (Brown and Day, 1983; Garner, 1982; Palinscar and Brown, 1984).

Learners who are educated in summary writing know how to paraphrase ideas in their own words instead of simply copying them. Summarizing instruction had significant influences on EFL learners' performance in standardized tests of reading comprehension (Bean and Steenwyk, 1984). The reason for this could be the metacognitive awareness that the learners have during the practice of summarizing. In this way, they become more critical readers, practice writing while reading, work on punctuation, and after all, they learn how to develop their reading skills hand in hand with their writing skills.

Thus, while many instructors believe that learners do not require explicit reading strategy training, it plays an important role in turning EFL learners into efficient and critical readers (Brown and Day, 1983). For years, and more recently, reading strategies, such as summarizing strategy, have been regarded as an important tool in reading comprehension but as the results of the present study revealed it is still worth putting more emphasis on it.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the current study, there was a significant but weak difference between the two groups' mean ranks. The lower mean rank of the summarizing group indicated that the type of strategy they had received had helped them to decrease their reading anxiety more than the inferencing group. This means that the participants of the summarizing strategy group had lower reading anxiety in comparison to the inferencing group.

Based on the obtained findings, the application of the summarizing strategy has enabled EFL learners to reduce their reading anxiety more than the inferencing group. Familiarity with summarizing strategy not only helps teachers to increase their teaching success but also can foster the EFL learners' awareness and enhance their deep understanding of the text which leads to lower levels of anxiety.

The findings of this study might be helpful to those who develop curricula for EFL teachers to include purposeful course(s) of reading to teach reading strategies and train capable strategic readers. Textbook writers, especially in the context of EFL, can also include a sufficient amount of information on reading strategies in their materials.

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